9: Gulick E-5 (1954) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1



The boarding-school, as well as the day-school, students include both boys and girls. The technical school and college students are nearly all boys, most of them at the American University, one in the government normal school, a couple at the government vocational school. All these institutions are in Beirut.

We cannot, unfortunately, be very specific about the "white-collar" class. The chief criterion is that none is a manual laborer, and they were obviously all considered to hold respectable positions. Many are clerks in offices or shops. The most outstanding is an official in one of the government ministries. There are no practicing physicians and no lawyers.

The "city specialists" can be subdivided as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Protestant preacher | 1 | Seamstress | 5 |
| Detective | 1 | Waiter | 5 |
| Fireman | 1 | Hospital attendant | 4 |
| Soldier (sergeant) | 1 | Janitor | 2 |
| Tailor | 2 | Surveyor | 1 |

The "merchants" consist of members of a single family, plus close village associates, who own and operate a store in Beirut. They have been very prosperous since World War II.

Four of the teachers work in the village itself, but the individuals concerned have not always done so, and the teachers in the village government school have in the past often been outsiders, assigned by the Ministry of Education.

Lastly, it will be observed that over half of the gainfully employed women and girls are medical nurses. The position is one of some prestige in itself. Parents and family prefer it to other jobs because it means that the girl will be under the protection of an institution, and also because it may eventuate in the marriage of the girl to a doctor, a very prestigeful status.

## MARITAL STATUS AND OCCUPATION

Table 6, which indicates the marital status of the population between the ages of fifteen and forty-five, reveals certain facts related to occupations. Everyone

TABLE 6. MARITAL STATUS: AGES 15–44

| | Men | | Women | | | Men | | Women | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Single | Married | Single | Married | Age | Single | Married | Single | Married |
| 15–19 | 39 | 0 | 27 | 0 | 30–34 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 7 |
| 20–24 | 30 | 1 | 17 | 7 | 35–39 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 12 |
| 25–29 | 13 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 40–44 | 2 | 14 | 0 | 12 |

#43 #43 rations that western entrepreneurs of similar class status would be appalled. A small grocery store, for example, might have a stock not worth more than one thousand Lebanese pounds. It would consist of items turning over rapidly, such as cigarettes, which would be in good supply, and probably some canned goods which present a sales turnover of once a year. There would be no breadth to the inventory. Indeed, one of the commonest replies in these stores, and even in much larger ones, is that they will get an item requested later that day, or tomorrow, or next week.

Or a shoemaker and repair man may have a shop two meters by five meters in which he operates by daily purchases of leather or purchases to meet yesterday's demand, so that there is no inventory whatsoever other than a little equipment.

Other small entrepreneurs make their livings variously in such business as small restaurants. These are mainly coffee houses for gossip and the accompanying gossip interactions.

## Clerical

#43 Under the heading of clerical, we included bookkeepers, agents usually representing foreign firms, messengers, secretaries, (a term locally used to include both stenographers and secretaries in the western sense) and telephone operators. They constitute slightly over six percent of the sample, which is remarkably small for a city.

## Sales and kindred occupations

#43 #41 The next category, sales and kindred occupations, was subdivided into commission agents, peddlers, and salesmen. The peddlers are a particularly large group. They are typically small in their operations, hawking vegetables, fruit, soft drinks, and miscellaneous gadgets through the streets of the town. They, perhaps, should have been included among the small businessmen, but it was felt that even with the minute size of many businesses, the peddlers

p. 16(A)

were too small to be thought of in this category. They represent almost six percent of the sample.

### Personal services

The category "personal services" was composed of the sub-groups, barbers, cooks, customs relievers, waiters, servants and miscellaneous occupations of similar calibre. Customs relievers, of whom seven were interviewed, is an occupation which would not have been thought of in most indexes of occupations, but constituted a significant part of our personal services sample category. Their occupation involves dealing with the customs officials as a service which relieves travellers and businessmen from the tedious procedures of customs.

Only twelve servants were found in the sample. This figure is misleading unless it is remembered that the servants are primarily women or young girls and they are not heads of families. The incidence of servants is better represented in the household composition chapter. The group accounts for over five percent of the sample.

### Protective services

Protective services include policemen, firemen, gendarmes, guardians and soldiers. Firemen are not a significant part of the protective services, because a stone and concrete city has little call for their services. The biggest group is that of policemen and gendarmes. A surprisingly large number of soldiers were interviewed, considering the small military establishment in Lebanon. The entire category was only slightly over four percent.

### Agricultural occupations and fishing

Agricultural workers are sub-divided into the workers proper who do not own land and owners who work on their land. Shepherds and fishermen were also included. It is interesting to note that, for a seaboard city, more shepherds were found than fishermen, although this is probably an accident of sampling. However, fishing is less of an occupation than might be supposed since fish are in short supply near the

P. 14(B)

Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)[1954] M1 Middle East
LEBANONME1



433

spinning was established in Tripoli in 1929 but the textile factories are not as big as those of Syria. In Beirut there are modern industries producing biscuits, vegetable oil, preserves, and soft drinks. There are in Lebanon a host of garages and workshops and some well-equipped repair shops and in Beirut there is an engineering firm that has successfully carried out contracts on major jobs for IPC. New factories are a sugar refinery, a stocking factory, and a cotton-seed oil plant. The following table shows the output of some industries for recent years.

SELECTED INDUSTRIES IN LEBANON

| Industry | Unit | Output | Year | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cotton, yarn | 000 tons | 0·1 | 1951 | 54,000 spindles |
| " fabric | mill. sq. metres | 4·9 | 1950 | 1,000 power looms, 300 hand looms |
| Woollen fabric | " | 0·4 | 1950 | 117 power looms |
| Silk and rayon | " | 7 | 1949 | 300–600 tons of cocoons each year; 900 looms, nearly half hand operated |
| Leather, soles | 000 tons | 1·0 | 1951 | Back to pre-war level |
| " uppers | mill. sq. ft. | 2·3 | | |
| Electricity | mill. kw. | 130 | 1951 | |
| Cement | 000 tons | 305·0 | 1951 | |
| Sugar | " | 3·1 | 1949 | Well below capacity; meets only one-fifth of requirements |
| Sweets and chocolates | " | 6·4 | 1950 | |
| Cigarettes | million | 908 | 1951 | Private monopolies under government supervision |
| Tobacco | 000 tons | 0·3 | 1950 | |
| Beer | 000 hectolitres | 13 | 1951 | |
| Wine | " | 8 | 1949 | |
| Arak | " | 10 | 1949 | |
| Industrial alcohol | 000 tons | 0·3 | 1951 | |
| Matches | million boxes | 60 | 1949 | |
| Soap | 000 tons | 6·3 | 1949 | |

(Sources: UN, Dept. of Economic Affairs, *Review of Economic Conditions in the Middle East, 1951–2*.)

*Commerce*

441

The chief characteristic of the Lebanese economy is its dependence on buying and selling rather than on producing. The merchants of Beirut have a world-wide reputation for shrewdness and efficiency in general commerce and they have grown rich on the transit trade. This has grown considerably in post-war years. According to estimates of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban the value of Lebanese re-exports amounted to £L19,491,000 in 1952 (compared with only £L8,901,000 in 1951), that of transit goods to £L1,258,601,000 in 1952 (compared with £L1,156,795,000 in 1951). On some of these Lebanon makes little profit but other items show good returns,

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
LEBANON MF1



441 particularly cars and other finished goods for which Lebanese merchants have agencies for the whole Levant. Another type of transit trade is the exchange and gold markets: in 1950 there was trading in precious metals to a value of £L96,332,000, which dropped in 1951 to £L22,974,000 and £L39,461,000 in 1952. On these transactions not only has the volume dropped but also the profit, but vast sums were made in 1947 and 1948 when the margins on exchange and gold transactions were wide.

439 433 Middle East nationalism may have two effects on Lebanese commerce: on the one hand, if Lebanon maintains a policy of welcoming and facilitating foreign capital and merchants, there may be an exodus to Beirut of foreign concerns such as has already occurred as a result of the political disorders of 1951–2. (A tendency in the other direction can be seen in the taking over in March 1953 of the French Beirut electricity company.) But, on the other hand, growing nationalism, parochialism, and isolationism in her neighbours could throw Lebanon on her own resources; Jordan and Syria are both trying to encourage their own ports and merchants to the detriment of Beirut, and Lebanon must now make her services as middle-man and entrepôt more attractive and cheap so that her neighbours will continue to use them. At the same time, if these neighbours squeeze Beirut too hard, they might threaten Lebanon with ruin and it is conceivable that she might be compelled to attempt to seek a replacement of the lost source of income in association with Israel.

*Finance*

457 [648] The Lebanese pound of 100 piastres is covered by the French franc under an agreement of 31 January 1948, and Lebanon is a member of the International Monetary Fund and of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, with a quota of $4½ million. At the end of 1951 45 per cent of the money circulating was covered by gold and a further 7 per cent by foreign currency—the gold cover has been steadily strengthened, to 54·9 per cent at the end of 1952, to 57·2 per cent by February 1953—when the gold backing amounted to £L114·25 million—and to 60·6 per cent by April 1953. This recent increase in the gold cover results from the part-repayment of an obligation incurred by Syria in 1948; a further instalment was to be repaid in October 1953. In 1939 there were £L29 million in notes circulating, in 1943 £L114 million, and in 1951 £L212 million, but by the middle of 1952 the circulation had dropped to £L199 million and it remained at around this figure until February 1953.